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Systematic Theology and Preaching

WILFRED SCOPES

(A paper read at the B.D. Teachers' Conference at Jabalpur in December 1956)

While the immediate purpose of the study of systematic theology is to enable the student to understand the faith, to grasp with conscience and reason the essential content of Christianity and attain to intellectual integrity as a Christian, this purpose is but part of the larger one in ministerial training, viz. to equip the student for his vocation and enable him to present to individuals and society the challenge of the Word of God in the context of today.

A THEOLOGY FOR TODAY

In the course of his study he learns that the presentation of truth for 2,000 years has been influenced by the needs and thought forms of society in each succeeding age. He comes to recognize that any proclamation of the Christian faith must fit the historic situation today if it is to make sense in any deep way to his contemporaries.

Sermons of the great Christian preachers are inevitably dated. Take for example John Wesley. He lived in an age of rationalism. True he preached the perennial gospel of a personal, loving, redeeming, sanctifying God, but he spoke to his age in a vocabulary they knew and in a way which, permeated as they were with their rationalistic world view, opened them up to Him for whom they had been looking.

But this is not eighteenth century England. This is twentieth century India—a free India—a land being rapidly transformed by new ideologies and new techniques, and we are called upon to recognize this. Not that we can favour 'situational preaching' which tries to find its answers in the situations, e.g. in moral platitudes, keys to success or the latest discoveries of psychiatry. Answers must come out of what happens when the situation is confronted by the event of Christ.

BULTMANN'S PLEA

In recent days a theologian who has created quite a stir in theological circles is Rudolph Bultmann who rightly claims that a man is always a man of his time whose needs are prompted by his historical situation. In his concern to demythologize the gospel he wants to make it possible for the modern preacher to convey the gospel intelligibly to his contemporaries. Bultmann points out that the cosmology of the N.T. is quite unacceptable to modern man, with its three-storied universe consisting of heaven above, the abode of God and of celestial beings; of hell below, the underworld or place of torment; and of earth in the middle, the scene of the supernatural activity of God and Satan. Nor should we be bothered with contemporary Jewish apocalypticism. All our thinking, he says, is shaped for good or ill by modern science, and thus any blind acceptance of the thought forms of the N.T. is quite unacceptable. Whatever may be Bultmann's excesses in his zeal for a new interpretation of N.T. mythology, we agree that the question must be faced, 'How do we preach an ancient gospel to a modern man? How can one translate a message couched in the terms and thought patterns of the first century into language that is meaningful to modern India?'

From this arise two important considerations:

1. Our theology must be up to date.
2. We must be conversant with our own historical situation.

The two are of course inter-related, because any up-to-date theology must take cognizance of current thought coming out of our historical situation, for example the renaissance of Hinduism and Buddhism, the dangers of syncretism and the presuppositions of Communism.

WANTED—CREATIVE ASIAN THINKING

It is not sufficient that our grasp of Western theology is up to date. All of us are conscious that already the theology we teach is too heavily weighted by Western thought because those who teach are either Westerners or have been trained in the Western system.

Winburn Thomas in a recent article entitled 'Teaching Theology in Asia' remarks: 'The hand of the missionary past lays nowhere in South-East Asia and the Far East more heavily than upon theological education... Thus far most of the theological contributions of Asian Christian scholars have been mere re-writes of Western theology. These scholars in becoming Christian also became denationalized... The theological system taught in Western texts is rooted in Western Church history. Each system is an outgrowth of cultural and sociological factors in the respective environments. In the Philippines, American professors or American-trained Filipinos teach the prevailing

American theologies. In India the British do likewise. In Indonesia, Europeans coach from Karl Barth's *Dogmatik*. The proper approach to each of the Asian churches is from the Bible, that its message might speak to their type of situation and experience. Each of the Asian peoples is at some stage of development described in the Old Testament... It might be possible to begin where they are in terms of their own religious development, and lead them to the New Testament. The sooner these expositions can be made by Asians trained in Asia, the sooner the dogmatic accent will be comprehensible to the people.'

It is good that active steps are being taken to establish the centre for research under the leadership of Dr. P. D. Devanandan. We hope that through this centre there may be established continuity with the past, with the treasures of the ecumenical Church, and with India's rich religious heritage; we hope also that there will emerge creative theological thinking related to today and tomorrow.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH CONTEMPORARY SITUATIONS

But if it is important to teach a Christian theology to our students which represents the best theological thinking of the twentieth century in Asia as well as the West, it is equally necessary that the students should know their own historical situation, for how can the Christian message be related to what is unknown? The really intelligent student of course will seek to keep himself informed of what is happening in his country and in the wider world, but I have often felt that we fail to give enough place to responsible discussion of current issues in our colleges. Could there not be at least a weekly seminar for staff and students, each in turn being asked to introduce current topics for responsible debate?

THE THREEFOLD VOCATION

We cannot remind ourselves too often that the ministerial vocation is a threefold one, of prophet and king (leader) as well as priest. It is here that official representatives of our religion differ so sharply from those of non-Christian faiths. A short time ago a friend of mine on a visit to the famous Madura temple in South India managed with difficulty to secure an interview with the Chief Priest. He found that he was a man of very modest education who could speak only Tamil. Since the office was hereditary he had been trained by his father in the intricacies of the prescribed rituals, but made no pretence of knowledge of Hindu philosophy or the message of Hinduism to modern India. Doubtless in the history of the Christian Church there have been illiterate priests, but those days are past. The Christian priest must also be a prophet and a leader.

One weakness in our present system of theological education is that it is inevitably departmentalized, and there is never time for the student to integrate fully what he has learned into a complete system of thought. He attends classes in Biblical exposition, systematic theology, Church history, comparative religions, homiletics and the rest of a heavy curriculum, and when he leaves college the various departments of knowledge are still largely unco-ordinated.

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the weekly sermon class. It is seldom that a student utilizes what he has learned in the various classes. When he prepares his sermon outlines he thinks only in terms of homiletics where certain rules have to be followed, for example, introduction, divisions to main subject, illustrations, conclusion. Often his subject-matter is such that one would never imagine that he has attended other classes. We feel like saying that a layman with no theological background at all could produce a better sermon!

What can we do about it?

We remind ourselves that all we can hope to do in three or four years is to set the student on the path of theological thinking. We cannot cover the whole text of the Bible in detailed exposition; we cannot deal with the implication of the Christian faith in all life's situations; we cannot acquaint him with the entire experience of the Christian Church in two thousand years of history. Our hope and expectation is that he will build on the foundations of scholarship we seek to lay.

Yet surely even before he leaves college the process of co-ordinating the various branches of study should be at least well on its way; otherwise he will enter upon his work in a state of profound bewilderment. This process can be facilitated in the college workshop of sermon preparation, and I would venture to relate here my own experience at the Andhra Union Theological College, Dornakal.

AN EXPERIMENT IN CO-ORDINATION

Being responsible for the classes both in systematic theology and homiletics it was possible for me to effect some co-ordination. For among the different types to be preached by second and third year students at Dornakal, one type was labelled 'Doctrinal', the purpose being to teach the essentials of the Christian faith in a systematic way through preaching. Thus at the close of each particular section in Theology, for example God, Man, Sin, Salvation, the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, appropriate themes and texts were discussed in the homiletical class, and after selection students were requested to present sermon outlines to be shared with whoever happened to be the next to preach a doctrinal sermon. A good deal of guidance was

needed in the preparation of a final outline which was made available to all the students. Yet they felt that they had a share in it all, and we had reason to believe that the training to simplify Christian doctrine and bring it down to the level of ordinary Christian laymen was of very great value. Before students leave college they ought to have prepared, under supervision, at least one sermon on the great festivals and events of the Christian year, which cover much of the essential Christian doctrine.

POST-GRADUATE TRAINING

In theological education I have always felt that there is a useful threefold parallel in the medical world of the specialist, the general practitioner, and the health-visitor or St. John's ambulance man. In these three fields, despite their obvious disparities, there is a set of fundamental presuppositions which obtain in each field ; there is the same modern approach to medical science. In the theological fields we have also the specialists on the one hand with lay preachers on the other, with the ordained pastors in the middle corresponding to the general practitioners in medicine, whose main function is to mediate the Word of God to the common people in practical terms. No medical school of any repute would think of sending out its graduates to minister in public medicine until they have had a period of internship where they learn to apply their training to human physical need under supervision.

In the West, some churches, aware of the need for some similar provision in the ministerial world, have made arrangements, either in the middle of theological training or at its close, for students to secure some practical training under older experienced ministers. It would be more difficult to do the same in India ; yet I am sure that effort should be made to do so, even if it means that students are compelled during internship or student pastorates to become 'tent-makers' like St. Paul.

Much can be done for them of course through post-graduate study courses sponsored by the churches. In some instances, for example certain dioceses of the Church of South India, such courses are well conducted over the period of probation for new theological graduates, although more emphasis might be given with profit to the integration of systematic theology and preaching.

SIMPLIFICATION

Something more should be said about the paramount need to simplify theology in preaching. It was Spurgeon who remarked to a group of students, 'Gentlemen, remember that the Lord's instruction to His disciples was "Feed my sheep" and "Feed my lambs". He did not say, "Feed my giraffes!".' Many theological graduates in their early days are tempted to air their new knowledge ; in fact this may be regarded as a vocational hazard ! Presentation of Christian truth must be simple, both in

content and in language. Simplicity in content does not exclude depth, for the most profound truths can be expressed in easily understood terms.

USE OF MOTHER TONGUE

But as long as students acquire theology through the medium of a language other than their own they will have difficulty in their presentation to their people. How many of our Indian ministers frankly confess that they have learned to think in English, and so are accustomed to preach from English notes. For those who have really mastered the English language there may be no handicap, but I am sure that it is not to be encouraged normally. The average graduate would do better to think in his own mother tongue, and then there will be more chance of his being intelligible to ordinary people.

In all parts of India the regional language is being revitalized and modernized. How far more attractive it is than the usual Christian version where vocabulary is antiquated, stilted, and in many cases incomprehensible outside Christian circles. To mediate Christian truth in any vital way, how necessary it is that our ministers should be thoroughly at home with the new vigorous language of their contemporaries! It is indeed tragic if the years of theological study in English result in creating a language gulf between a minister and his own people.

Considerations such as these have impelled us to strengthen in recent years our L.Th. institutions where instruction is given in the mother tongue, and to look forward to the day when it will be possible to raise them to the B.D. level. That day will remain far off while adequate textbooks are not available in the regional languages. But we cannot deny that true indigenization of the message will only come finally when serious theological thinking and teaching are carried on in the mother tongue. The achievement of this is one of the major challenges facing us in India. The eternal gospel, as Winburn Thomas reminds us, must be proclaimed in the language, thought forms, and concepts of the times which the people recognize as their own.

Finally, our theology and our preaching must be such as to impart to the Church the qualities of true spiritual authority. It must not be afraid to speak to the world and in concrete terms, both in respect of the larger issues of our times, and also on the local levels concerning spiritual and social needs in its immediate surroundings. The Church must speak 'not in a tone of well-meant advice, but with a burning sense of calling, of being over-powered by the Word of God.'

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The call to follow Christ always means a call to share the work of forgiving men their sins. Forgiveness is the Christlike suffering which it is the Christian's duty to bear.

D. BONHOEFFER

The Meaning of Grace

M. P. JOHN

Christianity has been rightly called the religion of Grace. When Dr. Otto wanted to emphasize the similarity between Christianity and the *bhakti* movement in Hinduism, he called the latter India's religion of grace. Our understanding of grace will colour our view of religion as a whole, and of the work of Christ in particular. The interpretation of grace has varied considerably in the history of the Church, but it is possible to distinguish two almost antithetical lines of thought and various attempts to find some mediating position between them.

OPPOSING VIEWS OF GRACE

The first of these we may call the Augustinian-Calvinistic view of grace. Luther may be included in this group, but not Paul, as these later exponents of Paul seem to have failed to grasp and present the wholeness of the Pauline presentation of the Gospel. They get their conclusions by logical deduction from some of Paul's statements. The 'twice-born' character of these men has been given as an explanation of this emphasis which may be summarized, using Dr. Moffatt's words, 'all is of grace'.¹ While the influence of conversion experience is not to be underrated, it would be foolish to assume that the 'once-born' type can justifiably have another theology. The truth that all is of grace is strongly emphasized in the New Testament as a whole and especially in Pauline writings. From this follow various conclusions: that God chooses man—election; that election is not conditioned by human goodness—not by works, but by faith; that good works are a consequence of forgiveness and a new fellowship rather than their cause. In Augustine's thought, no good work is possible apart from God, that is (by interpretation) apart from the grace of Christ given in baptism, and hence the virtues of the pagans are only splendid vices. He sees two kinds of grace, one in predestination to baptism and membership in the Church in this life; the other in predestination to salvation in the life to come, sealed by the gift of power for persevering unto the end. Human will is incapable of resisting the will of God; grace

¹ James Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, p. 131.

is irresistible. Men have become pawns in a great game and God is the only player.

Augustine did not trust logic enough to draw explicitly the implied conclusion of double predestination, as was done by Calvin. For the bishop of Hippo all theology flowed from the one supreme principle of the universal and absolute sovereignty of God. It was left undecided whether God predestined his elect without regard to the history of mankind and decreed the fall so that there might be a *massa damnata* from which they could be picked or whether He foreknew the fall and then resolved to deliver certain favoured individuals out of the mass of perdition. Calvin, disliking loose ends and uncertainties in his system, chose the latter alternative.

The opposite of this position is the type of thought that has been associated since early days with the name of Pelagius. Pelagius was obviously a 'once-born' man, of unquestionable morals, and his inner experience coloured his thinking. Pelagianism has been called a heresy and Augustinianism and Calvinism were considered orthodox, and so Pelagius probably did not get a fair deal. With this type of thought we may associate Socrates' idea that knowledge is virtue and that it is only ignorance that causes man to do what is wrong, the more recent deistic ideas of a God who was removed from the world, and the liberal hope that education will solve all human problems. That *avidya* is at the root of all trouble is a common view in Hindu religious thinking too. Here man's freedom and responsibility were taken seriously and Kant's dictum that 'ought' implies 'can' was assumed. Man was responsible for what he made of himself, and could do what he wanted. To be saved one had to be worthy of salvation, and it was in man's power to become so worthy. Only, it is rather difficult to see why, when one is already worthy to be saved, there should be any more salvation. Pelagius and his companions may have been logically right, but they did not take into account the whole of experience and Scripture.

A WAY OF COMPROMISE

Between these two were various groups and schools which tried to hold on both to divine sovereignty and to human freedom, by limiting both in some way. The name synergism may be given to this type of thought even though the term itself seems to have been used only at a much later time. John Cassian, a contemporary of Augustine and Pelagius, called a semi-Pelagian but who should more rightly be called a semi-Augustinian, and Arminius of post-Reformation period and Wesley have been grouped together as representing this point of view. Here divine foreknowledge was pressed into service to solve the dilemma of divine election and the call to good works, both of which are found in the Scriptures. It was assumed that God in foreknowledge predestined those who would be good for salvation.

As divine foreknowledge cannot be wrong, being divine, and cannot fail, being coupled with omnipotence, logically we are still in difficulty as human freedom would only be apparent. But it was denied that God's foreknowledge in any way affected man's choices. Milton puts into the mouth of the Almighty these words:

‘They themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I. If I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain, unforeknown.’¹

We should give credit to the sunergists for their deep-seated aversion to two theories, which though logically more satisfying, offended their sense of the justice and goodness of God on the one hand and the sense of human responsibility on the other. They valiantly tried to find a way out, a way of compromise, in some way limiting both divine sovereignty and human freedom.

Here we are brought face to face with the basic problem in understanding the meaning of grace. To deny the sovereign freedom and authority of God is to make Him less than God. To make salvation depend in any sense on human merit is to make void the cross of Christ, is against the highest experience of those whom we consider to have walked closest to God, and will in the end throw us into the pit of despair. To analyse and codify the commandment of love into a number of ordinances that can be fulfilled with some energy still left to do some acts of super-erogation is to fail to understand the meaning of grace and love completely. To affirm God's sovereignty and power in such terms as to make man a pawn in the divine game makes him an automaton, and there does not seem to be much point in saving an automaton at such cost to God Himself. While the best teachers of the sovereign grace and freedom of God were men of great piety and self-discipline, it cannot be forgotten that the quality of their lives was in many ways in spite of their theology and not the logical consequence of it. And some of their followers quoted the Scriptures and their teaching in defence of loose living.² Antinomianism becomes legitimate, giving man the freedom not to strive as striving is useless.³

¹ *Paradise Lost*, II, p. 116.

² See Reinhold Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man*, III, p. 116.

³ Considering these opposites and attempts at compromise, one is reminded of a letter written long before ‘dialectical’ theology became popular. Charles Simeon, a Cambridge preacher, wrote at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

‘The truth is not in the middle, and not in one extreme but in both extremes . . . Here are two extremes . . . Calvinism and Arminianism (for you need not to be told how long Calvin and Arminius lived before St. Paul). “How do you move in reference to these, Paul? In a golden mean?” “No.” “To one extreme?” “No.” “How then?” “To both extremes; today I am a strong Calvinist, tomorrow a strong Arminian.” “Well, well, Paul, I see thou art beside thyself; go to Aristotle and learn the golden mean.” But I am unfortunate; I formerly read Aristotle and

It is not pleasant for logical minds to live with an unsolved contradiction, but the fulness of the Biblical presentation of the redemptive activity of God makes it impossible for us to reduce it to a logically perfect system. As Moffatt puts it, 'When the apostle (Paul) sought to transmit "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ", which had dawned upon himself outside Damascus, his good news may be described as a message or proclamation announcing that "All is of grace, and grace is for all".'¹

If Moffatt's summary of Paul's message is justifiable, the doctrine of double predestination, supposedly deduced from Paul's idea of the sovereign freedom of God is inadmissible. Along with this another point must be raised, the place that Paul gives to human decision and action. The whole evangelistic venture of the early church with its call 'repent', is based on it. The great ethical sections of Pauline epistles and a good many other passages in the New Testament bear witness to this emphasis. Serving our purpose even more closely are some passages where the tension of the two aspects, the divine and the human, is stated.

'... Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for God is at work in you, both to will and work for his good pleasure.'² 'This statement,' Niebuhr writes, 'of the relation of divine grace to human freedom and responsibility does more justice to the complex facts involved than either purely deterministic or purely moralistic interpretations of conversion.'³ He also calls attention to Revelation 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

It is impossible to fit what the New Testament has to say on the relations of man and God into a theology that aspires to be an exact science like logic or mathematics, using words as if they were identical with the truths for which they stand. Paradoxical combinations of indicative and imperative like 'If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit,'⁴ and 'If then you have been raised up with Christ, seek the things that are above...',⁵ ought to warn us that we cannot move according to laws of formal logic

liked him very much ; I have since read Paul and caught some strange notions, oscillating (not vacillating) from pole to pole. Sometimes I am a high Calvinist, at other times a low Arminian, so that if extremes please you, I am your man ; only remember, it is not one extreme that we are to go to, but to *both* extremes . . . We shall be ready (in the estimation of the world and of *moderate* Christians) to go to Bedlam together.'

Quoted by C. E. Padwick, *Henry Martyn*, p. 68.

¹ Moffatt, *ibid*.

² Phil. 2:12-13.

³ Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁴ Gal. 5:25.

⁵ Col. 3:1.

here. In this realm words are not containers of truth. They should not be used to narrow down and limit ideas, but rather to suggest and point to them. This may be the reason why religious poetry and music and liturgical forms last longer than theologies. This is not an excuse for laziness in thinking, but a warning that we must be aware of the limitations of our thought. Thomas Aquinas's classification or division of the various kinds of grace may be a brilliant piece of analysis, but it is extremely difficult to see the religious value of it, when religion is viewed as a relation between two personal beings. The analysis may be true, as true as the scientific analysis and statements about the wave lengths and volume of different notes in a piece of music. This may sound irreverent, but who calculates the different kinds of love between two friends, or better, between husband and wife?

Even the distinction that is sometimes made between grace as power and grace as pardon seems to be inadequate, unsatisfactory and misleading, as it divides one activity of God into two. The grace that predestines man, controls the world, and works all things together for the good of them that love God is not different from the grace that brings pardon. God's power over man is not different from God's power in man that transforms him.

BIBLICAL VIEW OF GRACE: THREE ASPECTS

Looking at the meaning of grace from the Biblical point of view we seem to have to comprehend together three aspects of it, not two: that all is of grace; that grace is for all; and then man must do his utmost. The whole of the Augustinian tradition is built upon an almost exclusive emphasis on the first of these. The experience of conversion did not leave in Paul, Augustine or Luther any trust in their own worthiness to be saved. For them, in a sense, conversion is in spite of themselves. It was irresistible. For Paul, it was the good pleasure of God that caused the revelation of His Son in him. It is not necessary to dwell more on this point as it is familiar in theology, except to say that this is true not only for the 'twice-born' but also for the 'once-born' who have spent all their lives searching for God. For them too grace is prevenient, and caused and controlled their search.¹ As creator and sustainer, as the One who made us what

¹ There is a story that comes from Islamic sources that illustrates our point, and it is specially telling as it originates in a very different tradition. 'A dervish was tempted by the devil to stop calling on Allah because Allah did not answer, "Here am I". The prophet Khadir appeared to the dervish in a vision with a message from Allah: "Was it not I who summoned thee to my service? Did I not make thee busy with my name? Thy calling "Allah" was my "Here am I"."

"... In that thou seekest thou hast treasure found,
Close with thy question is the answer bound."

Quoted by G. W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion*, p. 136.

we are, and as we are, our yearnings and strivings do not have their ultimate origin in ourselves but in Him. Unless He has found us we will not be led to search for Him. The Psalmist's cry,

‘As the heart longs for flowing streams,
so longs my soul for thee, O God,’

is itself a response, not a stimulus.

If all is of grace, it is also true that grace is for all. Strict predestinarians rationalized the problem that all men had not turned to God by the explanation that God predestined some and did not predestine others to salvation. They got away from attributing injustice or partiality to God by the argument that no man deserved anything good at God's hands. But it is not only the fear of making God unjust that causes us to rebel against the doctrine of double predestination. The form that it took in Christian history, condemning all unbaptized children into hell, and the pagan philosophers into the upper reaches of (Dante's) *Inferno*, is partly responsible for this aversion. The primary objection is that it takes away all human freedom, and along with this is the corollary that love, devotion, or fellowship that is not free is not worth anything. If there is any ground for universalism, it must be in the availability of grace for everyone. Destruction or damnation cannot but be viewed as a failure on God's part, and we cannot see this happening except by a deliberate human rejection of God.

The third aspect, which is in some ways a corollary of the second, is that if all is of grace, and grace is for all, then it must be our responsibility to accept it. This must be done with our whole devotion and strength. This must be what Paul means when he says, ‘Work out your own salvation *with fear and trembling*.’ The great decisions that make human lives so different one from another—some finding meaning and value and creative activity in life, others finding life hollow, meaningless and an occasion for destructiveness—must follow from our responsibility. This is not to deny the responsibility of the community for the character of the individual, but in spite of the community each man makes or mars his life.

Much has been made of ‘acceptance’, in modern psychotherapeutic or pastoral counselling situations, as a necessary element in the work of healing, and also as an instance of what may be called grace in a secular setting. What is not emphasized so often, but is as true, is that the healing process begins only when the patient or the counselee begins to make his own decisions and act on them. It is in the making of these decisions that the beginning is seen of the growth of a healthy personality in the place of the old one.

It is not easy to state a combination of these three in a logically consistent fashion. In connection with the first of these we have to emphasize the truths that Paul and Augustine and

others after them have tried to establish by the doctrine of prevenient grace. Not only the 'twice-born', but the 'once-born' as well must realize that ultimately all comes from God and he is what he is because of grace. No place is left for man to boast before God or to *claim* salvation from Him.¹

In creation and sustenance, in the call to a meaningful life, in the admission to a fellowship in Christ and in the gift of forgiveness to which we can lay no claim, in putting deep desires and hungers in us that are satisfied by nothing less than God Himself, His grace is prior to anything that we can do. Here the experience not only of Jeremiah and Paul, but also of many others less known, would bear witness to the prevenience of grace.

IS GRACE FOR ALL ?

The Church on the whole has not been too willing to accept the truth that grace is for all. Experience is obviously against it when we think of the many for whom the purposes of God in human life mean little or nothing. We recognize that God causes His sun to shine and rain to fall on good and evil alike, but we ascribe that to the regularities of nature and the amoral character of the physical universe. The feeling that Isaiah expresses, that the end of the prophetic activity is to make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed,² is not unreasonable in view of the actual results of his work. Mark puts the same idea into the mouth of Jesus when he suggests that the purpose of the parables was to keep the people from understanding.³ There seems to be also the fear that if it is asserted that grace is for all, the moral incentive may disappear from life. Paul too faced this danger when his critics interpreted his teaching to imply that we are to continue in sin that grace may abound.⁴

While the need of striving and self-discipline (*askesis*) has not been on the whole forgotten by the church, this aspect of Christian life has not been integrated with the rest of theology sufficiently in the past. Textbooks on the Atonement seldom make reference to aspects of religious life like the sacraments and devotional exercises, in and through which the meaning of being one with God in will and purpose is understood and the transforming power of God experienced. We have to recapture the equilibrium which Paul and the other New Testament writers maintain between the work of God in Christ for man as well as in man.

¹ Cf. Luke 17:10.

² 1 Cor. 4:7 ; Isa. 6:10.

³ Mark 4:12.

⁴ Rom. 6:1.

GRACE A CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP

To conclude: How are we to think and speak of grace? We pray that grace may be given us. In this we follow good tradition, and the words may be too precious to be abandoned, but it must be realized that they have the drawback of leading us to think of grace as something that is given and received, as a *spiritual substance*. This misunderstanding is often seen in the interpretation of sacraments as visible and external vehicles of internal and invisible grace. It would seem that attempts to identify grace with the Holy Spirit share the same weakness.¹ The true understanding of grace can come only as we see it as a relationship where a creative transformation takes place rather than as a gift that can be given or received. Here it is in no way to be differentiated from the Divine outgoing love. It is also the same as the self-revelation of God wherein He gives not information about Himself, but Himself in a redemptive relationship. We think of grace, of revelation, and of love separately, and write books about them separately, because our eyes see so little at a time, and our minds can comprehend so little at a time. We think of justification and sanctification as different, one being a legal and the other a moral process, forgetting that in God who does both, there is no difference between legality and morality. When people think of God's grace and justice as tending in opposite directions they are reading into God contradictions that have a place only in our limited and perverted thinking and experience. The redemptive grace of God is not different from anything else that God does, for He is always acting redemptively. He created man a free being, and therefore will not coerce him. Man having abused his freedom cannot enter back into the right relationship with God by his own effort. The solution lies in the gracious relationship into which we are called to enter in and through Christ, a relationship in which we are justified and sanctified. Man is made in such a way that significant relationships are the most creative and transforming things in life, and in such the opposition is overcome between the external and the internal, the subjective and the objective. We do not have to think of grace as something that comes into life. Life becomes deeper and creative, finds new sources of energy and new springs of action, and finds its real *telos* in this relationship of grace.



There is only one problem on which all my existence, peace and my happiness depend: to discover myself in discovering God. If I find Him, I will find myself and if I find my true self, I will find Him.

THOMAS MERTON

¹ For a persuasive attempt at such identification see N. P. Williams, *The Grace of God*, pp. 110ff.

The Attitude of the Apologists to Non-Christian Religions

DONALD F. HUDSON

(We print below some selections from a paper on the above subject given at a meeting of the theological teachers of Bishop's College, Calcutta, and Serampore College. The original paper dealt in more detail with the writings of Justin and Athenagoras, and their relevance to conditions in India. It is hoped this contribution will be read with interest by our readers.—EDITORS.)

The modern period of the Church in India is at present in the middle of its second century, and therefore it seems worth considering this situation in relation to the situation at the same period of the Early Church. I wish to make a few rough parallels in introduction: the Christians are a minority, but a growing, and in some respects an influential minority; there are a growing number of intellectual leaders in the Church, who are able to meet non-Christian intellectuals on their own ground; the attitude of the Government is not hostile, but at times it is wary; there are strong non-Christian religions facing the Church, one monotheistic, and the other polytheistic and philosophic; there is a feeling that to be a Christian is to desert the traditional faith of the country, and therefore to be a bad citizen. All these points were true, to a greater or less degree, of the Church in the time of the Apologists, and their approach to the situation may give us some pointers to our own approach at this particular period.

The three documents dealt with in the paper are Justin's *Apology*, his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, and the *Plea regarding Christians* by Athenagoras, all of which are now easily accessible in the Library of Christian Classics and which are the main documents of the period.

Justin was apparently a Gentile, but born in Samaria, and therefore brought up in the environment of the monotheistic rival to Christianity, Judaism. At the same time he made himself familiar with all the various schools of Greek philosophy, and became a professional philosopher. He never apparently became an official leader of the Church, but in his later life in Rome appears to have been rather like some Christian Sadhus in India, meeting and discussing with non-Christians, and bringing them to a knowledge of Christ. His conversion was due to an old man who pointed him to the Biblical revelation as the true way to the

knowledge of God, and in this Justin claims that he gained the true philosophy.

JUSTIN AND JUDAISM

His knowledge of Judaism is seen in the dialogue with Trypho, and his approach to monotheism was vividly illuminated for me by an experience in a conference in Pakistan about the teaching of Scripture in Arts-Science Colleges. My own approach had assumed that the most important point was to stress the positive message of Christianity, and so when we were considering a possible two-year course for Intermediate students who were not likely to have any background and might never read the Bible afterwards, I thought that the first priority should be to tell the story of the life of Jesus, and then perhaps to go on to the story of Acts, and a bit more of the New Testament teaching. The rest of the people, especially two or three who were themselves converts, insisted most strongly that the first approach to the Muslim should be through the Old Testament, starting with the people and the stories he knew from the Koran, and putting by the side the true stories from the Old Testament, of which previously he had only a distorted knowledge. This is exactly the approach of Justin to Trypho, and as far as the Muslim is concerned, we are in a better position, since Justin had to insist that the LXX was a better text than the Hebrew, which in some cases was doubtful in the extreme. The method is not to argue, but to place the true by the side of the false and let it speak. If a man is prepared to give credence to a sacred text, the way to bring home the truth to him is to do it through the text itself, and if it is possible to show the Muslim that there are contradictions in his text which are resolved in the Bible, it is possible to bring him to the truth. Justin had an advantage in dealing with the same text, and putting a correct interpretation against a false one, so that there was no criticism of the text itself, but the method is available for us also.

JUSTIN AND GENTILES

Justin's approach to Gentiles, which is seen in the Apologies, is very similar in method, in that it is based on an appeal to the Bible record, and an emphasis on Christianity as the true philosophy. His approach to similarities between the stories about Christ and the stories about pagan gods has an interesting *ad hominem* argument which might be applied to recent Buddhist publications; he argues that if the pagan accepts such stories about his own gods, why cannot he accept them about Christ, and therefore agree to the truth of the Bible? He also accepts the good points in other philosophies when he says, 'Those who lived in accordance with Logos are Christians, even though they were called godless, such as, among the Greeks, Socrates, and Heraclitus and others like them . . . so also those who lived with-

out Logos were ungracious and enemies to Christ, and murderers of those who lived by Logos. But those who lived by Logos, and those who so live now, are Christians.'

The fundamental approach of Justin is thoroughly Biblical. He emphasizes the continual revelation of Christ in the whole of the Bible in a way which is completely modern. We do not need to interpret the details as he did, but if he could use the Old Testament to appeal to the Roman philosophers, we, too, should be able to use it to appeal to Hindu philosophers. Just how we can do it is a matter for investigation.

THE APPROACH OF ATHENAGORAS

The approach of Athenagoras is in many ways similar, but the main difference is that instead of using copious quotations from the Old Testament he shows a complete and thorough grasp of Greek mythology, and the background ideas of those to whom he is speaking. His main attack is on the idea that race and religion must go together, and that therefore a man who deserts his national faith to become a Christian is a bad citizen. He quotes all kinds of peculiar forms of worship which are practised in different parts of the Empire, but none of which are proscribed as Christianity is. He quotes at length from the philosophers, showing that the Christian ideas are very similar to others which are not condemned, and then he sets out to prove on the basis of reason that the fundamental truths of the Christian faith are not unsound.

The persons with whom Athenagoras was dealing were many of them very similar to those with whom we have to deal. Nominally they were polytheists, but very few educated men had much use for the old gods, and preferred to study one or other of the schools of philosophy which were current. Some of the philosophers were serious men, earnestly seeking truth, but others were quacks, who were willing to batten on the credulity of anyone who would listen to them, and at the same time were the practitioners of various cults, mostly drawn from the Eastern parts of the Empire. Like all men, they were not consistent, and even many of the more educated still kept their hold on the old ideas, just as many Hindus will say that idolatry and the various ceremonies of Hinduism mean nothing to them, but they do not drop them altogether.

LESSONS FOR THE INDIAN CHURCH

If we are to meet these people and persuade them, the first need, surely, is to follow the example of Justin, in examining the things they really believe, and being prepared to provide reasons why we do not believe those things; or of Athenagoras, in getting a thorough grasp of the traditional stories, so that we can show where these stories must be criticized. Secondly, our approach

must be one of reason, not merely of emotion, and we must be prepared to start with the premisses with which they start, which means we must have the readiness to study those premisses. Thirdly, we must turn always to the account of what God has done, in the Bible, and must centre all things, as Justin did, round the revelation in Christ. Fourthly, we must be prepared to witness, not only in our arguments, but in our lives, by showing the effect of Christ's teaching, and by being able to show that those who follow him are not guilty of the things which their accusers allege, and of which they themselves often *are* guilty. Fifthly, we must be ready to say, with Justin, that everyone may not exactly agree with all we say, but if he accepts Jesus as Christ and Lord, he will be saved.

And the result? Justin was martyred!



Man's total response to nature must include not merely the making of a pattern that may be called true but also the recognition that God is mediated to him both in the pattern and in the experience; and that therefore every experience and every experiment is an authentic encounter with the divine. As Whitehead puts it, 'every event, on its finer side, introduces God into the world!' If we could get thus far, we should cease from every contrast between nature and science, for science would be recognized as one of the languages in which God was revealed, and the work of scientists would be seen as part of God's work. We should cease to trouble ourselves about a conflict of immanence and transcendence, since both would be found in our scientific study. On the one hand, the pattern of which we dreamed would never be complete, and never fully realized: it would stand as a pointer of transcendence, over against the relativity and ambivalence of any experiment, however well conceived. On the other hand there would be immanence, since we need only to raise the stone or cleave the wood, and we should find Him... To be able to pass from the transcendence of pattern to the immanence of an authentic encounter is to have one's awareness marvellously enriched... To hold these two aspects of God together is to know that all life and every material element in it is sacramental.

C. A. COULSON



Men may view their rôles in history as either that of *sufferers* or that of *leaders*, and if either of these functions is understood in its ultimate spiritual terms, then the two functions are fused together: the leader is specially qualified to suffer, and the sufferer is specially qualified to lead.

P. S. MINEAR

Review Article

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND NATURAL SCIENCE

H. J. TAYLOR

The importance of this book* arises from the fact that Dr. Mascall is singularly well qualified to write it. At Cambridge he was a wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos, and gave particular attention to relativity and quantum theory. He has evidently made a scholarly study of modern cosmology, and is familiar with contemporary scientific thought in many fields. He is also one of the most outstanding theologians of the day, and is the author of several well-known books on theological subjects.

The relation of Religion and Science raises intricate and profound problems, which cannot be dealt with adequately on an elementary level. Many expositions fail because of an imperfect understanding either of science or of theology. Although at the present time there is widespread interest in the subject, and although books, pamphlets, and articles upon it are published continually, there are very few discussions which are competent and thorough. This book is both. The theologian will welcome it as throwing a penetrating light on many obscure questions. The scientist will rejoice to find a theologian who can talk his language. Dr. Mascall shows remarkable erudition in both fields, but it is perhaps not unfair to describe him as a theologian who understands science rather than as a scientist who understands theology.

In his general approach Mascall deprecates the tendency to see science and religion as necessarily opposed to one another. 'One does not propose', he says, 'to conceive one's subject in the light of a warfare, a struggle or even a conflict. I am sorry to disappoint anyone who may be looking forward either to a spectacular rout of the devils of science (falsely so called) by the angels of orthodox theology or, on the other hand, to a sensational capitulation of the forces of superstition and reaction to the spirit of enlightenment and progress . . . so far as my own acquaintance with theology and science is concerned, I simply cannot see the question of their relations in that light.' It is rather a question of establishing contact between different approaches to reality: 'There is a large domain of thought in which it is possible for theologians and scientists to engage in intelligent, good-humoured and fruitful conversation.' No doubt he is right. He does not deny, of course, that there have been fierce battles in the past, and that there are very radical differences of outlook at the present time.

Amongst the fundamental questions considered are the nature of scientific theories, the necessity or contingency of the world, the idea of creation, the problem of indeterminacy, the relation of body and soul, and the purpose of creation. The object is to consider these matters in some detail, rather than browse discursively in a wider field. There are full references to sources, and the contributions of outstanding thinkers are discussed at length.

SOME SCIENTIFIC THEORIES

A century ago it was taken as almost self-evident that a scientific statement, hypothesis or theory, was to be interpreted as a straightforward

* *Christian Theology and Natural Science*: by E. L. Mascall. Bampton Lectures, 1956. Orient Longmans, Calcutta. 25s.

literal description of the real world. As such it was either true or false. The present picture is radically different. Relativity theory, while not denying that there is an 'objective' world independent of the observer, showed that events must necessarily present themselves differently to different observers. A may observe as a red circle what B observes as a blue ellipse. Both descriptions are equally 'right', along with an infinity of others, and there is no single unique description of an event or succession of events.

Quantum theory, on the other hand, has introduced us to a world of events on the sub-microscopic scale which are not observable at all in the ordinary sense, and which can only be described with the help of a probability calculus. The concepts used in the theory have only a very indirect connection with observation. It is highly debatable whether such an entity as an electron can be considered to have the same status in experience as ordinary objects such as tables and chairs, and it would be very hard indeed to claim that status for such recondite concepts as Schrödinger's Ψ function.

A physical theory is in fact a free construction of the human mind, designed to exhibit certain properties. If these properties correspond to what we observe in the actual world, the theory is to that extent successful. Halliday, a thorough-going logical positivist, puts it in this way: 'It is the rôle of theory to give, on the basis of a few hypotheses, a simple unified description of as many experiments as possible. The question of the *ultimate truth* of either hypothesis or theory simply does not arise. Theories and hypotheses may be replaced at any time by more useful ones . . . It is commonly held by other philosophies that the universe is a vast reservoir of truths and that it is the function of the scientist to uncover these truths. A logical positivist, however, sees no operational way to decide whether a given theory or hypothesis represents "absolute truth" or not . . . His goal is to give as economical a description as possible of the sense perceptions that come (or that can be made to come) within his experience.'

Mascall fully recognizes these features of scientific theory, and comes to the following conclusion: 'The maps or models which science uses, whether constructed out of physical images or purely mathematical concepts, are no more than deductive systems whose function is to co-ordinate and to predict empirical observations. There is a large margin of arbitrariness as to which theory we adopt in any particular case, and there is no reason to suppose that logical necessity in the structure of a model implies any kind of necessity in the structure of the facts which it depicts.' It may appear remarkable to find a positivist and a Christian theologian putting forward the same view, but the agreement, it must be noted, amounts only to a common recognition of the nature of scientific theory. Mascall vigorously denies that the positivist setting is in any way necessary. He welcomes the decline of 'the superficial literalist view of scientific theories which held the field from the time of Newton almost to the present day' as the removal of a false barrier. If the theologian believes in a real world of meaning and purpose, the scientist can no longer gainsay him on the ground that the real world is that which is described by the scientific theories.

The chapter on contingency is an admirable discussion of a difficult and abstruse subject. The question is, to what extent must the universe necessarily exhibit those features which we observe, or could it conceivably have been otherwise? Eddington maintained that the generalizations which we call the laws of physics could be deduced by theoretical reasoning, without empirical experiments. He gave the famous analogy of the fishing-net with the two-inch mesh. The fisherman observes empirically that all catchable fish are more than two inches long, but the same generalization could have been arrived at *a priori* by inspecting the net. In the same way the system of thought by which we interpret our experience imposes certain generalizations which we may discover empirically, but which should be deducible *a priori*. Eddington developed this point of

view in abstruse mathematical investigations over a series of years, and actually calculated from his theory the numerical values of the fundamental constants of physics.

AN ALTERNATIVE COSMOLOGY

Milne developed an alternative cosmology in which he also sought to show that from a few very general postulates the detailed characteristics of the universe could be derived by pure deduction. The extent to which either Eddington or Milne really achieved this aim is still a matter of controversy. But even if it were achieved, there is the further question whether the fundamental postulates are self-evident, or can be seen to be logically necessary. Mascall comments: 'Only if this latter claim were substantiated would the actual universe be shown to be logically necessary and its apparent contingency be shown to be an illusion. In other words, to prove the necessity of the actual universe two things must be done. Firstly, certain fundamental cosmological principles must be shown to be necessary. Secondly, it must be shown that, given those fundamental cosmological principles, the world that actually exists follows with logical necessity from them.'

All this has an obvious bearing on Christian theology, for which the contingency of the world is a cardinal point. 'The world', says Mascall, 'has a double contingency; first of all a contingency of *existence*, in the sense that God need not have made a world at all, and then a contingency of *nature*, in the sense that, even if God was going to make a world, he need not have made the particular world which he has made.' But if God does create a world 'it will be both contingent and orderly, since it is the work of a God who is both free and rational. It will embody regularities and patterns, since its Creator is rational, but the particular regularities and patterns which it embodies cannot be predicted *a priori*, since he is free; they can only be discovered by examination'.

Surely the last statement goes too far, as Mascall seems to admit at the end of his discussion. While we may not accept all the implications of Eddington's and Milne's cosmologies, their work has made clear that we must expect at least some of the features of the universe to be knowable *a priori*. The mathematician predicts the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter *a priori*, without the formality of measurement, and 'what Eddington and Milne have shown, if their arguments are valid, is simply that regularities and co-ordinations of this kind are more pervasive than had previously been realized'. Mascall concludes: 'If modern cosmologists have been clever enough to discover by general epistemological principles what the detailed nature of a knowable universe must be, we can only be grateful to them. Their success in this endeavour leaves it, however, an entirely open question why such a universe should exist and should be experienced . . . Whether the world has been manufactured by the mind, or the mind manufactured by the world, or both manufactured by God is a question that lies outside the scope of physical science.'

CREATION

'Creation' is a word which has been freely used, in modern scientific writing, to mean two things. Firstly, many lines of evidence lead to the view that the present order of things originated from a super-dense aggregation of matter which exploded. The millions of receding nebulae which we now observe are the debris of this cosmic explosion. The initial event can be approximately dated at an epoch some 6,000 million years ago; it represents the starting point of the universe and has been regarded by some as the original creative act of God. Secondly, there is the hypothesis of Bondi, Gold, and Hoyle, that the universe had no beginning, but that matter not previously present continually makes its appearance at the rate of about one hydrogen atom per cubic mile per hour. This hypothesis is usually given the name of 'continuous creation'.

The use of the word creation in purely scientific discussions is unfortunate, and a more neutral term would have been preferable. The word carries a halo of theological implications. Theologically creation implies the activity of a creator, but in the scientific theory it merely implies that the quantity of matter present at the time t_1 is not the same as the quantity at time t_2 . Mascall is at pains to expound the Christian doctrine of creation as something much deeper than a temporal change in the quantity of matter. 'The act by which God creates the world does not occur *in* time, for time is itself an attribute of that which is created. The difference between the creation of a world which had a beginning and the creation of a world which has always existed is not the difference between an act which began at a certain moment and an act which has always been going on. It is the difference between two acts which are both timeless: the act of creating a world whose temporal measure has a lower boundary and the act of creating a world whose temporal measure has not.'

An adequate review of these problems in a short article is impossible, but Mascall's discussion will repay careful study. The same is true of his treatment of indeterminacy, though when he maintains, as he seems to do, that the undetermined events of atomic physics are caused individually by the free will of God, not many physicists will find the conclusion acceptable. Through the whole book Mascall repeatedly affirms that theology in the last resort is independent of scientific theory. Here are some instances: 'So far as I can see, almost any cosmological theory can be interpreted either religiously or atheistically, according to the general metaphysical position of the interpreter.' 'Mass and energy after all are simply operationally defined quantities like any others; their conservation may be of considerable interest to physicists, but it has no metaphysical significance.' 'The findings of modern science tell us a great deal for which we should be grateful about the nature of the universe that God has made, but we shall be wise if we build our conviction that God has made it upon other foundations than those of modern science.' 'If Einstein's belief that indeterminism is only a passing phase should turn out to be correct, the withers of the Christian theologian will remain unwrung.' While all this is doubtless true in a sense, the point seems to be overstressed. Surely theology is not so completely metaphysical that scientific knowledge has no bearing on it at all.

The concluding chapters will probably carry less conviction than the others to scientific readers. Many, for example, will find it difficult to take seriously an elaborate discussion of the precise moment at which the human foetus becomes animated by a 'soul', a question which is reminiscent of medieval scholasticism. But even here Mascall displays an impressive acquaintance with psychological and biological thought.

The book as a whole is extremely well written, but it is not food for babes, and it demands a considerable intellectual effort. One cannot expect a book on this theme to be particularly easy reading. Sentences such as the following slow down the pace: 'Just as the essence of perception is not sensing objects but apprehending them, even if we can only apprehend them through the mediation of sense, so the paradigm of a real world is not its sensible imaginability but its intelligible apprehensibility.' But this is not typical, and one gladly acknowledges that considering the profundity of the subject-matter, the writing is often distinguished by its clarity and precision.

We may be grateful to Dr. Mascall for these Bampton lectures, which form a most able and stimulating contribution to the literature of Science and Religion.



Rabbi Jacob said, 'This world is like a vestibule before the world to come: prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the festival chamber.'

PIRQUE ABOOTH

Book Reviews

The Doctrine of the Trinity : by Rev. Peter May, M.A. (The Christian Students' Library No. 7, C.L.S., Post Box 501, Madras 3. Re.1-2-0.)

'This book is written in the conviction that the doctrine of the Trinity is *the* supreme Christian doctrine.' Indeed there is no doubt that this contribution to the Christian Students' Library Series must be considered as essential reading for students, and I am delighted to see that it has been arranged in such an attractive and helpful style. We see the wealth of a teacher's experience in the way he has presented his subject ; that is, in the treatment of his subject from the Biblical and theological aspects, set in the life and worship of the Church, with some consideration of the evangelistic task in Modern India. But also in the manner of his writing where he expresses some difficult ideas with remarkable clarity and understanding, and helps the student by dividing up his work into sections that can hardly be said to strain or over-tax one's concentration. I must also mention that footnotes are reduced to an absolute minimum, and the directions for further reading are very liberally and helpfully introduced. It is quite obvious that in this treatment of the subject in a matter of 80 pages, it is not possible to consider all the arguments, and it is not necessary. But I do feel, reading through the suggestions for further reading, that the writer has given every help for the student to pursue the subject further, and become familiar with the views of modern writers.

On the section Trinitarian Theology I was rather interested to see how the writer would deal with the great controversies arising in the early Church over the Trinitarian formula 'Three Persons in One Substance'. I was somewhat relieved that he did not attempt it. Yet if the student would read something like the Right Rev. J. W. C. Wand's recent 'Four Great Heresies', he will find that the debate is not so dull and irrelevant to modern needs as he might imagine.

Calcutta

W. S. REID

The Gospel according to St. Matthew : Introduction and Commentary : by J. R. Macphail. C.L.S., Post Box No. 501, Madras 3. Rs.4-12-0; Cloth, Rs.5-6-0.

The amount of painstaking scholarship that has been compressed into less than 300 pages in this book is amazing. Besides a detailed commentary on the text with a large number of longer notes, there are 'Essays' on such a variety of subjects as, e.g. The Geography of Palestine, the History and Literature of Israel, the Holy Spirit, Parables, the Son of Man, to mention only a few. The author says he has written especially for 'readers who are inclined to study the beginnings of Christianity thoroughly': but one cannot but wonder how many Bible students will have the earnestness and perseverance to work through this varied mass of material, and emerge with any clear idea of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, to the confession of which the writer claims it to be his chief aim to lead them. It is indeed difficult to see the wood for the trees.

One has only praise for the excellent work of the Wesley Press in the printing and general set up of the book. But it is unfortunate that many

of the most important points are made in quotations from other writers, printed in small type, while large type is used for the author's notes on such lesser matters as the unnecessarily detailed description of synagogue services (p. 44) or of the dress of the Jews (p. 61).

The writer is so anxious to 'detect the underlying assumptions in his own mind, and to give the reader the means to judge for himself', that he appears to go out of his way to belittle or discount the traditional interpretations of the Church, though he is ready to give credence to an unsupported theory of Otto that our Lord expected his death to be by stoning, and even builds on it an untraditional interpretation of the symbolism of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Also a closer study of the O.T. quotations in St. Matthew in their original context might lead to a less disparaging conclusion than that 'Matthew's texts are interpreted literally with little regard for their context and original meaning'. The First Gospel has suffered already too much from this kind of criticism.

In spite of much that is of value in the notes and comments, one misses any sense of the value and importance of the Gospel as a whole—what has been called its 'massive unity'. This is obscured by the undue emphasis laid on the real or supposed 'peculiarities' of the evangelist. It may well be that Matthew arranged his material on the ministry of our Lord in five blocks in conscious imitation of the Pentateuch; but there is surely something wrong with an analysis of the Gospel which relegates the story of the Passion and Resurrection to the position of a mere 'Epilogue', and misses the point of 'God with us' at the beginning and 'Lo, I am with you always' at the end.

Behala, Calcutta

SISTER GERTRUDE, O.M.S.E.

The Protestant Bishop: The Life of Henry Compton, 1632–1713, Bishop of London: by Edward Carpenter. Longmans, Calcutta, pp. 398. 35s.

Canon Carpenter tells us that it was Professor Norman Sykes who suggested Bishop Compton to him as the subject of a biography. Prof. Sykes has done much to remind us of the solid achievements of the English episcopate. Too often English bishops of former centuries have been painted in too strong a colour, as either complete scoundrels or complete idlers. Bishop Compton has been the object of fairly sweeping denunciation.

Certainly his political activities were controversial. He was involved in political intrigue and even military manoeuvres. (He was the last English bishop to appear in arms.) It was he who virtually organized the removal of the Papist English King, James II, and in the course of negotiations laid himself open to charges of underhand dealings. He alone of the English bishops signed the invitation to the Dutch Protestant Prince William to come over and be King of England.

But this book gives a fuller and fairer picture of him than has yet been available. Without in anyway evading the problems raised in our minds by the above adventurings, Canon Carpenter shows that the Bishop was also a true father in God: at court, where he influenced the future Queen Anne, with great consequences for good; in his diocese, where he held regular conferences for the guidance and instruction of his clergy and people: in his pastoral oversight of the American plantations; and in his relations with the French Huguenot, Greek orthodox and other foreign churches, which looked to him as their adviser and protector in Britain. He was not only a protestant, watchful for abuses, but also a churchman, building up his flock.

The book contains several misprints: on p. 32, line 23, '2089' should read '20,089': on p. 50, line 33, the word 'his' is added in error: and on p. 323, footnote, Prof. Sykes' book on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is dated '1918' instead of '1948'.

Calcutta

A. C. M. HARGREAVES

Making Prayer Real : by Lynn James Radcliffe. Longmans, Green & Co.
18s. 6d.

I must begin this review by a confession. When I saw the title, I said to myself, 'I know a great deal about prayer and do not need instruction about "making prayer real"'; I had read most of the authorities mentioned in the book. But as I read *Making Prayer Real* I found I knew very little about prayer, and I have learnt a great deal from reading this book. It is one of the greatest books I have ever read. It is written in very simple language, but it sounds great depths, and points to great heights. I quote words from the preface which I found true as I read the book, 'There are no shortcuts in prayer. Techniques in themselves are not enough. I have therefore endeavoured to outline as clearly as possible the various stages in the prayer process and the objectives of the great movements of the Spirit as we turn toward God. If we can be true to the spirit of these approaches we shall, each of us, gradually develop personal methods of praying that are most helpful to us as individuals.'

The book falls into five parts: the first suggesting ways by which we can make our prayer life more real and effective; the second dealing with the answering, and the not answering, of prayers; the third with Spiritual Discipline which prayer requires; the fourth with meditation and contemplation and the fifth with the way of Oneness with God.

The last chapter in the fifth part requires very careful and prayerful reading, as it tells how our self-centred lives can be transformed into God-centred lives.

Coimbatore, S. India

BISHOP H. PAKENHAM-WALSH

Religion as Salvation : by Harris Franklin Rall. Longmans, Green & Co.,
London, 1956. 19s. 6d.

I do not think that the main title, 'Religion as Salvation', of the book is well-chosen. Is not religion a disputed, perhaps an uneasy term in these modern days? Again, *is* religion salvation? There are many religions from primitivism to polytheism—some identifying religion with nationalism, some with morality, some with philosophy, some with a state of agnosticism, some with a future hell and heaven, some with a way of life. Thus religion has a variety of forms. Which form does the author intend to describe as 'Salvation'? Even if he chooses Christianity to be the form, it has different expressions—some differing fundamentally from others. Which form of Christianity does he put down as salvation? Further, religion as salvation sounds somewhat as a finished product, not as life abundant and growing as the author tries to show in the course of the book. Finally a test question can be asked: Has the author been successful in interpreting religion in general or Christianity in particular as 'Salvation'? While the study is wide and penetrating, one is lost in the mass of details—the paraphernalia of an established religion—and gets the impression that salvation is still to be sought and *is not* the religion.

The subject-matter of the book is divided into three parts. Part one deals with Man, part two with Sin and part three with Salvation. The author traces the current conceptions of Man. It would certainly be helpful if mention were made of the dimension of man's existence neglected by these modern views. In discussing the origin and nature of Man, he touches the depth of the problem underlying man's creation: 'But to hold to a divine creation, whether of man or of the universe, does not necessarily mean a creation out of nothing at some one moment or period of time. God's work of creation is related to natural processes just as his work of revelation and redemption is related to man's nature and the movement of history. Nor can we return to the Biblical literalism which saw the first chapter of Genesis, not as a great hymn of faith in a creator God, but as a literal account of the method of creation' (p. 21). Again, 'The important matter for us is not when or under just what conditions man appeared

on earth, but the fact that such a being as man is here. Time and mode of appearance do not alter the fact that man is something new and different' (p. 22). The double dimension of man—living in nature and transcending it—is well attested: 'As long as I can conceive something better than myself, I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life' (p. 26). The author does not subscribe to the 'relic' theory of the Reformers nor to the theory of 'total depravity' of the fundamentalists. He recognizes the significance and depth when he says: 'We are not concerned with a supposed perfection of primitive man of which we have no knowledge. Two facts stand out for us and are of deep import. First, man is a rational, moral, spiritual being, belonging to the world of truth and good and God, made to know this and receive this. Second, man has sinned; evil has perverted him but not destroyed his capacity to know and respond' (p. 35). The author rightly calls attention to broader aspects of sinful action as against Barth and Niebuhr (p. 62); but it must be acknowledged that the penetration of the neo-orthodox thinkers regarding human nature is deeper and he no doubt draws upon their insights. An honest but enlightening interpretation of the origin of sin is given when he admits that it cannot be known as to how sin arose in history but that it is found in life as a reality (pp. 68-70). However, I consider that he has underrated the depth and mystery of sin when he says, 'Under these conditions sin is neither an inscrutable mystery nor a necessity' (p. 72). 'The Genesis story only asserts what is plain to everyone who looks upon man and his history' (p. 73).

The author deals with the topic Salvation at a considerable length, that rightly, because the message of the book is to present Religion as Salvation. The importance and the inevitable place of salvation in religion is well stated in the chapter on 'The Meaning of Salvation': 'The hunger for God, the sense of guilt, the need of healing and wholeness within, the need of inner power alike to rule ourselves and to meet the world, the desire for oneness with our fellows and for mutual understanding and help, the search for meaning and purpose in the world's life and our own, a faith that will give us confidence as we face the world's future and hope as we think out our own—these eternal needs still cry for satisfaction (p. 90). The questions usually asked in connection with salvation—from what, to what, and by what—are discussed and, in the following chapter, related and relevantly made applicable to the individual life and experience. Salvation is thus a life of restored fellowship with God and with others; the inevitable elements of this life are 'grace, repentance, faith, forgiveness, and reconciliation'. The author expounds and interprets in the course of a few chapters the deep meaning of these terms avoiding the errors of fundamentalism and liberalism. In the chapters 'The Ways of Help' and 'Symbol and Sacrament' he conducts a deep study of prayer and worship, of the Word of God, of the common life as a means of grace, and finally of the symbol and sacrament. In all these his study is as objective as possible and his interpretations creative and helpful. Speaking about the Church, the author says, one can approach it in two ways—one is to assume that Jesus Christ instituted the Church with its orders, and the other 'recognizes the creative fact of Christ as standing back of the Church. It sees the Church as central in God's purpose and plan, and its life as the work of the Spirit of God. But it sees God as working from within, in the life of the Church as of the believer. The directive of that life was given to the Church in Christ, in his word and life. The guidance was given by the Spirit working in the fellowship' (p. 183). He elaborates and explains this fellowship by the use of three terms—the shared, the sharing, the sharers. The author's analysis of the divine and human aspects of the Church seem to me somewhat to minimize the depth or mystery of the dimension involved. The Lord of the Church is not only its origin, though 'as standing back of the Church' (p. 182), but also its transcendent guide and immanent life. The 'dual' nature of the Church cannot be adequately explained in intellectual categories; it can only be experienced in

life of faith and fellowship. The last three chapters are devoted to a discussion of the meaning and the doctrine of Salvation in history, and of what we may hope for—the eschatology.

On the whole the book is a substantial study on Theology and suggests helpful approaches to current problems. It avoids both the stereotyped methods and the extremist views and strikes a new and creative method of interpretation. The book challenges the attention not only of theological students and professors but also of the reading public—the laity and the clergy.

Madras

P. DAVID



As a magnifying glass concentrates the rays of the sun into a little burning knot of heat that can set fire to a dry leaf or a piece of paper, so the mysteries of Christ in the Gospel concentrate the rays of God's light and fire to a point that sets fire to the spirit of man . . . Through the glass of His humanity He concentrates the rays of His Holy Spirit upon us so that we feel the burn and all mystical experience is infused into the soul through the man Christ.

THOMAS MERTON



Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes . . . We must place the second proposition alongside of the first. Not only do those who believe obey, but only those who obey believe. In the one case faith is the condition of obedience, and in the other obedience the condition of faith . . . If the first half of the proposition stands alone, the believer is exposed to the danger of cheap grace, which is another word for damnation. If the second half stands alone, the believer is exposed to the danger of salvation through works, which is also another word for damnation.

D. BONHOEFFER



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